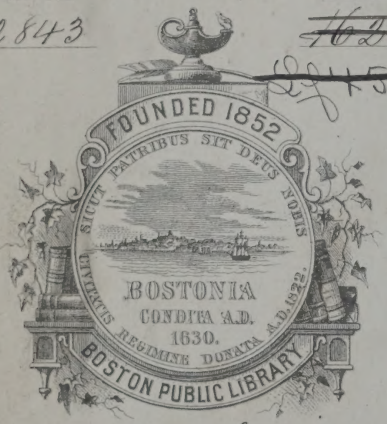
Ballads of Home



~~ROXBURY BRANCH~~

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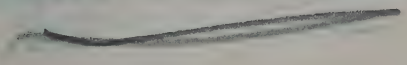


BALLADS OF HOME.

EDITED BY

GEORGE M. BAKER.

WITH



FORTY FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

"BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE,
THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME."

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS.
1877.

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Ballads of Home.

Home.

Home's not merely four square walls,
Though with pictures hung and gilded;
Home is where affection calls,
Filled with shrines the heart hath builded.
Home! go watch the faithful dove,
Sailing 'neath the heaven above us;
Home is where there's one to love,
Home is where there's one to love us!

Home's not merely roof and room;
It needs something to endear it:
Home is where the heart can bloom,
Where there's some kind lip to cheer it!
What is home with none to meet,
None to welcome, none to greet us?
Home is sweet — and only sweet —
Where there's one we love to meet us!

The Dilemma.

NOW, by the bless'd Paphian Queen,
Who heaves the breast of sweet sixteen;
By every name I cut on bark
Before my morning-star grew dark;
By Hymen's torch, by Cupid's dart,
By all that thrills the beating heart;
The bright, black eye, the melting blue,—
I cannot choose between the two.

I had a vision in my dreams;
I saw a row of twenty beams;
From every beam a rope was hung,
In every rope a lover swung.
I asked the hue of every eye
That bade each luckless lover die;
Ten livid lips said, Heavenly blue,
And ten accused the darker hue.

I asked a matron which she deem'd
With fairest light of beauty beam'd.
She answer'd, some thought both were fair,—
Give her blue eyes and golden hair.
I might have liked her judgment well,
But as she spoke, she rung the bell,
And all her girls, not small nor few,
Came marching in — their eyes were blue.



I asked a maiden; back she flung
The locks that round her forehead hung,
And turned her eye, a glorious one,
Bright as a diamond in the sun,
On me, until, beneath its rays,
I felt as if my hair would blaze;
She liked all eyes but eyes of green;
She look'd at me: what could she mean?

Ah! many lids Love lurks between,
Nor heeds the coloring of his screen;
And when his random arrows fly,
The victim falls, but knows not why.
Gaze not upon his shield of jet,
The shaft upon the string is set;
Look not beneath his azure veil,
Though every limb were cased in mail.

Well, both might make a martyr break
The chain that bound him to the stake,
And both, with but a single ray,
Can melt our very hearts away;
And both, when balanced, hardly seem
To stir the scales, or rock the beam;
But that is dearest, all the while,
That wears for us the sweetest smile.

WIFE, CHILDREN, AND FRIENDS.

WHEN the black-lettered list to the gods was presented
(The list of what fate for each mortal intends),
At the long string of ills a kind goddess relented,
And slipped in three blessings — wife, children, and friends.

In vain surely Pluto maintained he was cheated,
For justice divine could not compass its ends,
The scheme of man's penance he swore was defeated,
For earth becomes heaven with — wife, children, and friends.

If the stock of our bliss is in stranger hands vested,
The fund, ill-secured, oft in bankruptcy ends;
But the heart issues bills which are never protested,
When drawn on the firm of — wife, children, and friends.

The day-spring of youth, still unclouded by sorrow,
Alone on itself for enjoyment depends;
But drear is the twilight of age if it borrow
No warmth from the smile of — wife, children, and friends.



Fate with Apple Parings.

WITHIN the window, framed in white,
A maid is sitting, passing fair,
While sunbeams dance across her face
And play amid her golden hair.

Beside her, on the high-backed chair,
A dish of ripe, red apples stands;
But fast their ruby coats they lose
Before her busy, nimble hands.

The parings curl and break, and fall,
A rosy pile, upon the floor;
Miss Mollie, blushing, turns to see
Tall Jedediah ope the door.

"Why Jed!" she says, "how do you do?
And how're the folks at home, to-day?
Just take a seat. I'm busy now:
We all must work before we play."

And faster still the dimpled hands
Are skimming o'er the apples bright,
While wrinkled parings tumble down,
In rosy coils, to left and right.

But slowly now, and carefully,
She moves the knife, that ne'er a break
Or blemish in the narrow stripe
Her haste or lack of care may make.

Uneasy in his chair, close by,
Tall Jed is watching warily;
And many a stolen glance from him
Does pretty Mollie chance to see.

But now she jumps up from her seat,
As if by love of mischief led,
And holds aloft the twisting peel,
Then swings it quickly round her head.

Now once, twice, thrice, she sweeps it round,
While Jed and she with laughter roar,
Then throws it down to take its shape
In roseate coils upon the floor.

"Now, Jed, be still; and let us learn
What happy fate's in store for me.
The name the letter here begins
Will sure my future husband's be!"

So, stooping down, and looking close,
She spies the homely letter "J,"
And hastily, but blushing deep,
She turns her merry eyes away:

But not too quick for happy Jed
To read the secret in her face;
And stepping up he takes her hand,
And says, with homely warmth and grace,



"Dear Mollie, what the Fates decree
You surely will not dare deny!
So shall not we, who love so well,
With Fate's decree at once comply?

"I have no palace for my home,
My name no empty glory gives;
But I've a heart as true to you
As any man on earth who lives.

"And, Mollie, I will work for you,
And earnestly will strive each day
To bring new happiness and love
To shed their light upon your way."

And Mollie, blushing, hung her head,
But then she did not tell him, "Nay!"
And Jed, with heart brimful of joy,
Homeward rejoicing went his way.

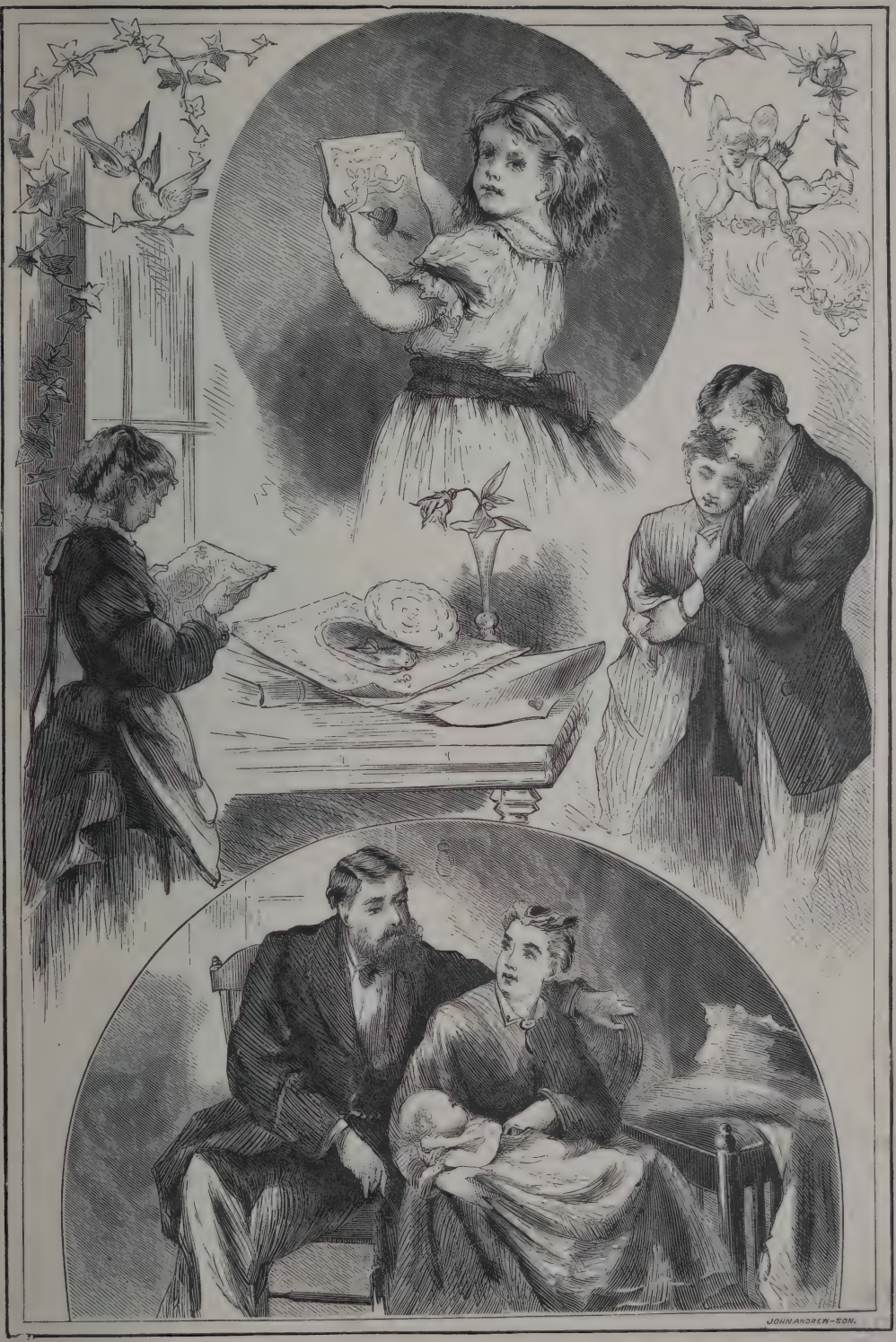
Red apples grew on Jed's good farm,
Which Mollie pared for many a day;
But ne'er without the thought that Fate
Had wisely made that apple J.

FOUR VALENTINES.

I REMEMBER my first Valentine,
The cause of childish joy,
For I was then a tiny girl,
The sender but a boy.
It was indeed a gorgeous thing,
In brilliant colors wrought;
Above a bleeding, broken heart
Fat Cupids fiercely fought.

The next love-message I received
When I was sweet sixteen,—
A pretty trifle, gilt and lace,
With tissue blue between;
Two pink hearts on an arrow fixed,
Surrounded by a wreath;
An altar, church, white doves and rings
Hymeneal lines beneath.

The third, ah, friends! it was the last,
The dearest and the best;
It told a tale of honest love,
It brought me joy and rest.


JOHN ANDREW & SON.

A cream-white shield of satin bore
A moss-rose wet with dew;
The name I loved was written on
A tiny scroll of blue.

The sender — well, I married him,
One bright St. Valentine:
He spoke the words that made his name,
Home, goods, and chattels mine.
I said 't was the *last* valentine;
But that I now recall,
For I have still another one,
The sweetest of them all, —

The sweetest and the prettiest,
A marvel 't is of grace;
Pink rounded limbs, pink chubby feet,
And rosy, dimpled face.
Fourteenth of Feb'u'ry it came,
Borne in the arms of Joy, —
What painted page can e'er compete
With this dear baby boy?
"What shall we name him?" papa says;
"Now tell me, wifie mine."
I smiling turn and, laughing, say,
"We 'll call him 'Valentine.'"

THE THREE FISHERS.

THREE fishers went sailing out into the west, —
Out into the west as the sun went down,
Each thought of the woman who loved him best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work and women must weep;
And there 's little to earn and many to keep,
Though the harbor bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up, ragged and brown;
But men must work and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden and waters deep,
And the harbor bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands,
For those who will never come back to the town;
For men must work and women must weep, —
And the sooner it 's over the sooner to sleep, —
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

The Four-Leaved Clover.

WITH sunny hair tossed lightly back,
And hat on shoulder flung,
And lips that knew no sterner care
Than rippling o'er with song,
Adown the mossy mead she tripped,—
A blithesome little lass
As ever meek-eyed violets lured
To search the spring-time grass.

The pink-white apple-blooms, which dropped
Their petals at her feet,
Than her rose-tinted, pretty dreams
Were not more fair and sweet.
And merry maidens will not pause
To wonder why she caught
(And smiled so archly) something more
Than the wild flowers she sought;

Nor why, within a little crack
Above the cottage door,
She slyly tucked a clover-sprig,
Whose numbered leaves were four;

And then, with rosy consciousness,
She donned a ribbon bright,
And hoped that handsome Rollin Kent
Would cross the glen that night.

Now, Rollin was a knowing lad,
And well, I ween, he knew
Where sweetest honeysuckle climbed
And brightest roses grew.
And well he knew whose artless ways
Made floral gifts more fair,
Whose little hand his button-hole
Could fill with daintiest care.

So, when a crimson splendor shot
Athwart the western sky,
A step upon the gravelled walk
Made Kitty's heart beat high.
A hand was on the latch, and lo!
The door was opened wide,
And Kitty's hands were on his arm,
In vain attempt to hide —

To hide, — ah, what, my little maid?
The tale your blushes tell:
Fanned by the breeze, when oped the door,
The four-leaved clover fell.
"Nay, darling," — it was Rollin's voice, —
"The good wives' tales are true.
Kiss me, my sweet, and so confess,
That you believe them too.


J. JOHN ANDREW & SON

"Don't crush the clover! Of all plants
It best deserves caress,—
Emblem of joy to me henceforth,
A charm to bring success.
I'll wear it alway. When life's stage
Requires an earnest part,
I'll kiss it on the battle eve:
Give me the right, dear heart!"

The marsh frogs rang their tiny bells,
Peal after peal, in glee,
And round the mushroom fairy-folk
Were dancing blithe and free,
When oped again the cottage door,
And walked the grassy way
A youth, within whose button-hole
A four-leaved clover lay.

OFT, IN THE STILLY NIGHT.

OFT, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me;
The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimmed and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken.
Thus in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends so linked together,
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.



THE FIRST OF APRIL.

"OCH! it 's wake wid the chills and the faver,
And faint wid the honger, ashtore,
And riddy to dhrop wid the thravel,
That brings me at last to ye's door.

"Faix! it 's little I hoave in the wide woorld,
Save thirteen small childers to tind,
Wid my Dennis gone off for a soldier,
And the praties quite coom to an ind.

"O, musha, me purty young darlint,
May yees niver know honger and cowld;
It 's besaching a morsil av comfort
For myshelf and the childers I 'm bowld."

The voice had a tremble and quiver
That called Kitty Cole from her book,—
Her revels in dreams of enchantment,
With fairies by ingle and nook.

The prince with his grace and his beauty,
The maid with her ringlets of gold,
The elves with their gambols and capers,
The goblins so reckless and bold,—

All vanished. Her bright dream was ended;
Romance, with its glitter, had fled;
And there, at the door of the dwelling,
Was an old woman begging for bread,

Such a crazy old witch of a woman
That Kitty stepped back in affright;
Her figure was bent nearly double,
Her features were hidden from sight.

She shivered, she shook, and she trembled;
She muttered, she grumbled, she groaned;
She coughed and she sneezed without ceasing,
And fast all her troubles bemoaned.

Poor Kitty was very much tempted
To turn her away from the door;
But she thought of her kind, gentle mother,
Ever ready to comfort the poor,

And the lessons of love and compassion
Her young heart had early been taught,—
To care for the weak and the helpless,
And give to the needy a thought.

So quickly she stepped to the threshold,
An arm round the old woman flung,
And looked with her eyes full of pity,
And spoke with a musical tongue:

"Come in, poor old lady, and rest you.
My mother from home is away;
But I know she would eagerly aid you,
So I will her wishes obey.



"There, sit you right down in this arm-chair, —
'T is mother's, the softest and best;
'T will comfort your poor tired body;
We call it the haven of rest, —

"While off to the kitchen I hurry
To forage for toast and for tea;
And never you fear, good old lady,
The children forgotten will be."

She starts on her errand of mercy,
But turns at a roar and a shout,
To find the old woman transforming
To a figure more healthy and stout.

And there sits her wild brother Harry,
Still wrapped in the old lady's dress,
With a face overflowing with laughter
At the sight of poor Kitty's distress.

"O Harry, how could you deceive me?
Of all tricks this is the worst.
You rascal, what could have induced you —"
"Why, Kitty, 't is April the first"

Ah, Kitty! the world is so wicked
That charity often is tried
By the garbs of deceit and imposture,
And justice is often denied.

Yet ever will love and compassion
Lend an ear to the prayer of the poor;
For 't is better a thousand deceive you
Than one needy be turned from the door.

Daisy Fate.

STILL Memory, with her magic rare,
Brings back the halcyon May-time,
When I was young, and life seemed fair,
And every day was "play-time."
Before me pass in changing view
The days long since departed,
When smiles were many, tears were few,
And I was happy-hearted.

I see an orchard where the trees
Bend their green branches over
To daisies swaying in the breeze,
And seas of nodding clover.
Round one tree flings her emerald charms
A wild Virginia creeper,
Wreathing about its giant arms,—
A frail but constant keeper.

Beneath this tree, long years gone past,
There stood a brown-eyed maiden;
O'er her the apple-blooms fell fast,
With spicy fragrance laden.



Beside this form of girlish grace
A youth stood 'mid the clover,
The earnest light upon whose face
Revealed the maiden's lover.

The leaflets from a daisy's crown
Off her white hand were falling,
And as they fluttered softly down,
The rosy lips kept calling, —
"He loves me little, loves me well,
He loves me not, and never,"
Then, blushing, as the last one fell,
With, "Loves me now, and ever."

Then stooped the youth to choose a flower
From out the snowy mazes,
That he might read with magic power
His fate among the daisies.
With dimpling cheek the roguish maid
Watched each white petal sever,
And laughed; for ah! the last one said,
"Thy sweetheart loves thee never!"

Those happy, halcyon days have fled,
That rosy, perfumed May-time;
Now life seems dark and hope is dead,
And lost for aye youth's play-time.
That daisy fate proved all too true,
In days long since departed.
Now tears are many, smiles are few,
And I am broken-hearted.

Susie Shelling Peas.

THE mowers are cutting the clover-patch
In the meadow beyond the rye;
The swallows, beneath the stable-thatch,
Low twitter their soft lullaby;
And drowsy "Trip" is trying to match
His molars against a bothering fly.

Fair Susie sits in the farmer's door,
With a basket on her knees;
Her sun-tinted fingers, o'er and o'er,
Are busily shelling peas;
While the parted lips of the maiden pour
A love-song forth on the summer breeze.

She sings of a lad in the clover-field,
A-raking her father's hay;
She knows, ere the moon has set her shield
Once more in the "Milky Way,"
The wedding-bell will have merrily pealed
A joyously sweet hymeneal lay.

Here, under this bowering garden shade,
Where the zephyrs fall and rise,
I'm watching the handsome farm-house maid,
Secure from her innocent eyes:
She little knows their light has betrayed
The love that deep in her bosom lies!


JOHN ANDREW & SON.

The jauntiest hat were fain to hide
Those tale-telling orbs of blue;
But now, as she lifts them fair and wide,
The mowers afar to view,
I see them beam with a beautiful pride
On the *one* she knows is stanch and true.

The gold of an emperor might not win
The heart in that maiden's breast!
But a sun-burned brow and a bearded chin,
On shoulders above the best
Of the lads that rake the windrows in
Long ago captured the bird in its nest.

Sing on, sweet Susie! thy lover will bring,
When he comes from the clover seas,
A smile in return for the song you fling
Meadow-ward on the noontide breeze;
And, Susie, it may, be a welcomer thing,—
A kiss for the girl that is shelling the peas!

Driving Home the Cows.

OUT of the clover and blue-eyed grass
He turned them into the river-lane;
One after another he let them pass,
Then fastened the meadow bars again.

Under the willows and over the hill
He patiently followed their sober pace;
The merry whistle for once was still,
And something shadowed the sunny face.

Only a boy! and his father had said
He never could let his youngest go:
Two already were lying dead
Under the feet of the trampling foe.

But after the evening's work was done,
And the frogs were loud in the meadow-swamp,
Over his shoulder he slung his gun,
And stealthily followed the footpath damp

Across the clover and through the wheat,
With resolute heart and purpose grim,
Though cold was the dew on his hurrying feet,
And the blind bat's flitting startled him.



Thrice since then had the lanes been white
And the orchards sweet with apple-bloom;
And now, when the cows came back at night,
The feeble father drove them home.

For news had come to the lonely farm
That three were lying where two had lain;
And the old man's tremulous, palsied arm
Could never lean on a son's again.

The summer day grew cool and late:
He went for the cows when the work was done;
But down the lane, as he opened the gate,
He saw them coming, one by one, —

Brindle, Ebony, Speckle, and Bess,
Shaking their horns in the evening wind,
Cropping the buttercups out of the grass:
But who was it following close behind?

Loosely swang in the idle air
The empty sleeve of army blue;
And worn and pale, from the crisping hair
Looked out a face that the father knew;

For Southern prisons will sometimes yawn
And yield their dead unto life again;
And the day that comes with a cloudy dawn,
In golden glory at last may wane.

The great tears sprang to their meeting eyes,
For the heart must speak when the lips are dumb;
And under the silent evening skies
Together they followed the cattle home.

Your Mission.

IF you cannot on the ocean
Sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billows,
Laughing at the storms you meet,
You can stand among the sailors
Anchored yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them
As they launch their boats away.

If you are too weak to journey
Up the mountain steep and high,
You can stand within the valley,
While the multitudes go by;
You can chant in happy measure,
As they slowly pass along:
Though they may forget the singer,
They will not forget the song.

If you have not gold and silver
Ever ready to command,
If you cannot towards the needy
Reach an ever open hand,
You can visit the afflicted,
O'er the erring you can weep,
You can be a true disciple,
Sitting at the Saviour's feet.



If you cannot in the conflict
 Prove yourself a soldier true,
If, where fire and smoke are thickest,
 There's no work for you to do:
When the battle-field is silent,
 You can go with careful tread,
You can bear away the wounded,
 You can cover up the dead.

Do not then stand idly waiting
 For some greater work to do;
Fortune is a lazy goddess,
 She will never come to you.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
 Do not fear to do or dare:
If you want a field of labor
 You can find it anywhere.

SPEAK GENTLY.

SPEAK gently; in this world of ours,
Where clouds o'ersweep the sky,
And sweetest flowers and fairest forms
Are ever first to die;
Where friendship changes, and the ties
That bind fond hearts are riven,
Mild, soothing words are like the stars
That light the midnight heaven.

There are enough of tears on earth,
Enough of toil and care;
And e'en the lightest heart hath much
To suffer and to bear.
Within each spirit's hidden depths
Some sweet hope withered lies,
From whose soft, faded bloom we turn
In sadness to the skies.

Speak gently, then, and win the smiles
Back to the shadowed face,
And bid the clouded brow resume
Its fresh and youthful grace.
Thy gentle words, perchance, may guide
A wanderer to the sky,
Or teach some earth-bound soul to soar
Above the things that die.



Lead gently back the erring feet
That love, perchance, to stray;
Thou canst not know how long they strove
Ere leaving virtue's way,
Nor with what desolating power
Despair's dark phantom came,
And with her sad touch made the heart
A desert, seared with flame.

Within that desert there is yet
Some pure oasis-spot,
Formed of sweet memories of scenes
That ne'er can be forgot.
For that bright soul, with care now worn,
Bowed down though it may be,
The selfsame Saviour died who gave
His priceless life for thee.

The Spells of Home.

BY the soft green light in the woody glade,
On the banks of moss where thy childhood played,
By the household tree through which thine eye
First looked in love to the summer sky;
By the dewy gleam, by the very breath
Of the primrose-tufts in the grass beneath,
Upon thy heart there is laid a spell
Holy and precious — oh, guard it well!

By the sleepy ripple of the stream,
Which hath lulled thee into many a dream,
By the shiver of the ivy leaves
To the wind of morn at thy casement eaves,
By the bee's deep murmur in the limes,
By the music of the Sabbath chimes,
By every sound of thy native shade,
Stronger and dearer the spell is made.

By the gathering round the winter hearth,
When twilight called unto household mirth,
By the fairy tale or the legend old
In that ring of happy faces told,
By the quiet hour when hearts unite
In the parting prayer and the kind "Good night!"
By the smiling eye and the loving tone,
Over thy life has the spell been thrown.

And bless that gift! It hath gentle might,
A guardian power and a guiding light.
It hath led the freeman forth to stand
In the mountain battles of his land;
It hath brought the wanderer o'er the seas
To die on the hills of his own fresh breeze;
And back to the gates of his father's hall
It hath led the weeping prodigal.

Yes! when thy heart, in its pride, would stray
From the pure first-loves of its youth away;
When the sullying breath of the world would come
O'er the flowers it brought from its childhood's home,
Think thou again of the woody glade,
And the sound by the rustling ivy made;
Think of the tree at thy father's door,
And the kindly spell shall have power once more.

LITTLE MARY'S WISH.

"I HAVE seen the first robin of spring, mother dear,
And have heard the brown darling sing.
You said, 'Hear it and wish, and 't will surely come true';
So I 've wished such a beautiful thing!

"I thought I would like to ask something for *you*,
But I could n't think what there could be
That you 'd want while you had all these beautiful things:
Besides, you have papa and me.

"So I wished for a ladder, so long that 't would stand
One end by our own cottage door,
And the other go up past the moon and the stars,
And lean against heaven's white floor.

"Then I 'd get you to put on my pretty white dress,
With my sash and my darling new shoes;
Then I 'd find some white roses to take up to God, —
The most beautiful ones I could choose.

"And you and dear papa would sit on the ground
And kiss me and tell me 'Good-by';
Then I 'd go up the ladder far out of your sight,
Till I came to the door in the sky.


JOHN ANDREW & SON.

"I wonder if God keeps the door fastened tight?
If but *one* little crack I could see,
I would whisper, 'Please God, let this little girl in,
She's as tired as she can be.

"'She came all alone from the earth to the sky,
For she's always been wanting to see
The gardens of heaven, with their robins and flowers:
Please, God, is there room there for me?'

"And then, when the angels had opened the door,
God would say, 'Bring the little child here,'
But He'd speak it so softly I'd not be afraid,
And He'd smile just like you, mother dear.

"He would put His kind arms round your dear little girl,
And I'd ask Him to send down for you,
And papa, and cousin, and all that I love —
Oh dear! don't you wish 't would come true?"

The next spring-time, when the robins came home,
They sang over grasses and flowers
That grew where the foot of the ladder stood
Whose top reached the heavenly bowers.

And the parents had dressed the pale, still child,
For her flight to the summer land,
In a fair white robe, with one snow-white rose
Folded tight in her pulseless hand.

And now at the foot of the ladder they sit,
Looking upward with quiet tears,
Till the beckoning hand and the fluttering robe
Of the child at the top appears.

CONTENTMENT.

SOME murmur, when the sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue;
And some with thankful love are filled
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied;
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How love has in their aid
(Love that not ever seems to tire)
Such rich provision made.



The Little Light-Keeper.

HERE is the story of a little child,
Who, with her father, lived beside the sea
On a lone island, from whose rocks was piled
A lighthouse tower of stoutest masonry,—
A sleepless sentinel, whose beaming eye
Watched through the night to warn of danger nigh.

One day her father, who had gone ashore,
Failed with the early twilight to return;
And so she sat, and wondered more and more,
Until the evening star began to burn,
And thought, "Our light should shed as true a ray,
Lest ships should be misled and cast away."

And so she sat, perplexed with anxious care,
And listened to the ocean's restless moan.
"What can I do? Indeed I cannot bear
Through all the dreary night to stay alone:
Nay, not alone," she thought; and, undismayed,
The little creature then knelt down and prayed.

Then she arose, and with a trembling hand
Slow dragged a chair beneath the well-trimmed light;
Perched her slight figure on the trusty stand,
And stretched on tiptoe to her utmost height,
And then reached up. Alas! her heart grew sick:
The lighted paper did not reach the wick.

What should she do in this her hour of need?
Naught could she find to make the pile more high
Till the big Bible, kept with careful heed,
And read at night and morning, met her eye;
But still she paused; for, with a reverent dread,
Upon the Book of God she feared to tread.

And yet she thought, "What if our light could save
Some ship from wreck upon the rocky shore!"
And so, with resolution strong and brave,
The heavy volume to the pile she bore.
The deed was done; the light's benignant ray
Beamed o'er the boiling breakers of the bay.

Her father sat upon the shore meanwhile,
Detained by cruel wretches, who had planned
To keep the light untended, and beguile
Some passing vessel on the rocky strand;
And when the cries of drowning men were o'er,
To steal the cargo as it washed ashore.

And as they sat there, plotting evil schemes,
Hoping the midnight hour would bring them luck,
True as a star, the light's reproachful beams
Flashed o'er the waters. Foiled and panic-struck,
They rose together with a sudden start,
And gruffly bade the keeper to depart.



Soon o'er the waves his little boat he steers,
Its white sail gleaming in that grateful light;
And now the strong man's eyes are full of tears,
To see afar that face, so wan and white,
Peering through darkness from the slippery rocks,
The night dews falling on her flaxen locks.

Glad was the daughter when her father came,
Proud was the father as he kissed his child;
But when she asked, with blush of bashful shame,
If her young feet the Bible had defiled,
"No, no," he said; "there never is abuse
When sacred things are put to noble use."

And so he soothed her till her thoughts grew calm,
And brought the Bible when she was in bed,
And read the glowing language of a psalm,
Until her heart grew warm and comforted;
And, listening to the roaring of the deep,
The little lighthouse-keeper fell asleep.

Something Cheap.

THERE'S not a cheaper thing on earth,
Nor yet one half so dear;
'T is worth more than distinguished birth,
Or thousands gained a year;
It lends the day a new delight,
'T is nature's firmest shield,
And adds more beauty to the night
Than all the stars may yield.

It maketh poverty content,
To-morrow whispers peace;
It is a gift from Heaven sent
For mortals to increase;
It meets you with a smile at morn,
It lulls you to repose, —
A flower for peer and peasant born,
An everlasting rose;

A charm to banish grief away,
To snatch the frown from care,
Turn tears to smiles, make dulness gay,
Spread gladness everywhere;
And yet 't is cheap as summer dew
That gems the lily's breast, —
A talisman for love, as true
As ever man possessed.


JOHN ANDREW-SON

As smiles the rainbow through the cloud
 When threatening storm begins;
As music 'mid the tempest loud,
 That still its sweet way wins;
As springs an arch across the tide,
 When waves conflicting form,
So comes this seraph to our side,
 This angel of our home.
What may this wondrous spirit be,
 With power unheard before,
This charm, the bright divinity?
 Good temper — nothing more!

REMONSTRANCE.

"COME out and hear the birds sing! Oh! wherefore sit you there
At the western window watching, dreamy-pale and still and fair,
While the warm summer wind disparts your tresses' clustering gold?
What is it on the dim sea-line your eyes would fain behold?"
"I seek a sail that never looms from out the purple haze
At rosy dawn or fading eve or in the noontide's blaze."

"A sail? Lo, many a column of white canvas far and near!
All day they glide across the blue, appear and disappear.
See, how they crowd the offing, flocking from the sultry South!
Why stirs a smile more sad than tears the patience of your mouth?"
"They lean before the freshening breeze, they cross the ocean floor;
But the ship that brings me tidings of my love comes nevermore."

"Come out into the garden, where the crimson phloxes burn,
And every slender lily-stem upbears a lustrous urn.
A thousand greetings float to you from bud and bell and star;
Their sweetness freights the breathing wind. How beautiful they are!"
"Their brilliant color blinds me; I sicken at their breath;
The whisper of this mournful wind is sad to me as death."

"And must you sit so white and cold while all the world is bright?
Ah, come with me and see how all is brimming with delight!
On the beach the emerald breaker murmurs o'er the tawny sand,
The white spray from the rock is tossed, by melting rainbows spanned."
"Nay, mock me not! I have no heart for nature's happiness:
One sound alone my soul can fill, one shape my sight can bless."



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"And are your fetters forged so fast, though you were free and strong,
By the old, mysterious madness, told in story and in song
Since burdened with the human race the world began to roll?
Can you not thrust the weight away, so heavy on your soul?"
"There is no power in earth or heaven such madness to destroy,
And I would not part with sorrow that is sweeter far than joy."

"O marvellous content that from such still despair is born!
Nay, I would wrestle with my fate till love were slain with scorn!
O mournful Mariana! I would never sit so pale,
Watching, with eyes grown dim with dreams, the coming of a sail."
"Peace, peace! How can you measure a depth you never knew?
My chains to me are dearer than your freedom is to you."

'TIS A LITTLE THING

TO give a cup of water; yet its draught
Of cool refreshment, drained by fevered lips,
May give a shock of pleasure to the frame
More exquisite than when nectarian juice
Renews the life of joy in happiest hours.
It is a little thing to speak a phrase
Of common comfort, which by daily use
Has almost lost its sense; yet on the ear
Of him who thought to die unrenowned, 't will fall
Like choicest music; fill the glazing eye
With gentle tears; relax the knotted hand
To know the bonds of fellowship again;
And shed on the departing soul a sense
(More precious than the benison of friends
About the honored death-bed of the rich)
To him who else were lonely, that another
Of the great family is near and feels.



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The Flower Mission, Junior.

WHAT time have you got now, hey, Cousin Ben?
I want a handful of—. What do you say?
Only five minutes more? I reckon, then,
We'd better skedaddle along our lay.
No use? 'T won't pay to run for the train?
The deuce you say! How long to the next?
Half an hour? Well, tears are vain,
And curses, too. But I swear I'm vexed

That I should have got you left, old boy;
But now that I have, I'll take the time
And pay old scores, as remarked Jim Joy,
When the judge kinder winked at a petty crime.
So puff away at your old cigar,
While I jump this fence for some golden rod.
Looks a heap like our prairies now, I sw'ar,
As the heavy blossoms sway and nod.

What am I going to do with all this trash?
Do you ask? Oh! come, now, lay kinder low;
Such squeamishness don't pan out worth a — dash,
As you Yankees sw'ar in print, with an "Oh!"
And pursed-up lips, as at virtue's knell,
'Cause we who hail from the grand, free West
A'n't hypocrites enough our oaths to correll
Behind our teeth, and let 'em be guessed.

What you s'pose I'll do with 'em? Come, now, guess.
Ask an easier one? That's good, but old.
Stick 'em on your desk? That would be a mess!
Not much, old fellow. You'll have to be told.
Do you think I'm as soft a galoot as that,—
I, the son of your father's sister Jule,
Who went off West and married Joe Pratt,
My dad, 'stead of stickin' fast to her school?

You might be proud of the nosegay, though;
For see — it's as much as I can clutch
Of hardhack, golden rod, tansy blow,
Thistle, and butter-an'-eggs, and such,
Not to speak of the autumn leaves. And here
Is a bunch of barberries, purtiest yet.
They say you Yankees eat them. Queer!
I'd as lief eat shoe-peg sauce, you bet!

.

What, in already? Kinder jumped!
Or did the time only seem to fly
'Cause I was thinkin' of how you'd be stumped
When you come to find the reason why
I brought these in? Well, I'll be round
To the store by an' by. . . . Oh! I didn't know
But p'r'aps you wouldn't care to be found
With me and my big nosegay in tow.

What street's this leads from the depot? South?
A part of the South Cove? Yes, just so.
And this little chap with tobacco-stained mouth
Must be one of the South Coves, hey? Ho, ho!



A joke for Jerry! What does he say?
Please, mister, give me a flower? You bet,
Little God-forsaken! That's my lay—
That's what I got 'em for. Now, you get!

And tell every playmate, dirty or not,
And every sweetheart of yours or theirs—
For graybeard or toddler that ha'n't got
A sweetheart, or never for "spooning" cares,
The dry rot's eatin' his heart away—
Yes, tell yer playmates and sweethearts quick
That Jerry Pratt's got a big nosegay.
See 'em swarm around, Ben, noisy and thick.

See here, little Yellow-Hair,—gold, I s'pose
The poets would call it,—here's a sprig
Of golden-rod and some tansy-blows
To match your hair. And you, little prig!
This thistle-blow's 'bout the thing for you;
It's much like love, as you'll find some day—
Prick or please, according as you shall woo:
Keep your ears agog when the asses bray.

Bright barberry berries and autumn leaves
For Black-Eyes here; and this pink flush
Of hardhack yon little blonde believes
Would fill her bill. What a row and rush
For the last! There it is. I say, Cousin Ben,
I reckon if I owned a garden like yours
I should give it a stripping now and then
For such fun as this. You'll find it endures.

Sweet Home.



MID pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there 's no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne 'er met elsewhere.
Home, home, sweet home!
There 's no place like home.

An exile from home splendor dazzles in vain;
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again,
The birds singing gayly that came at my call, —
Give me these with peace of mind dearer than all:
Home, home, sweet home.



A Woman's Waiting.

UNDER the apple-tree blossoms, in May,
We sat and watched as the sun went down;
Behind us the road stretched back to the east,
On, through the meadows, to Danbury town.

Silent we sat, for our hearts were full,
Silently watched the reddening sky,
And saw the clouds across the west
Like the phantoms of ships sail silently.

Robert had come with a story to tell,—
I knew it before he had said a word,—
It looked from his eye and it shadowed his face:
He was going to march with the Twenty-third.

We had been neighbors from childhood up,
Gone to school by the selfsame way,
Climbed the same steep woodland paths,
Knelt in the same old church to pray.

We had wandered together, boy and girl,
Where wild flowers grew and wild grapes hung;
Tasted the sweetness of summer days
When the hearts are true and life is young.

But never a love-word had crossed his lips,
Never a hint of pledge or vow,
Until, as the sun went down that night,
His tremulous kisses touched my brow.

"Jenny," he said, "I've a work to do
For God and my country and the right.
True hearts, strong arms, are needed now,
I dare not stay away from the fight.

"Will you give me a pledge to cheer me on,—
A hope to look forward by and by?
Will you wait for me, Jenny, till I come back?"
"I will wait," I answered, "until I die."

The May moon rose as we walked that night
Back through the meadows to Danbury town;
And one star rose and shone by her side;
Calmly and sweetly they both looked down.

The scent of blossoms was in the air,
The sky was blue and the eve was bright,
And Robert said, as he walked by my side,
"Old Danbury town is fair to-night.

"I shall think of it, Jenny, when far away,
Placid and still 'neath the moon as now.
I shall see it, darling, in many a dream,
And you with the moonlight on your brow."

No matter what else were his parting words,—
They are mine to treasure until I die,
With the clinging kisses and lingering looks,
The tender pain of that fond good-by.

I did not weep — I tried to be brave —
I watched him until he was out of sight;
Then suddenly all the world grew dark,
And I was blind in the bright May night.

Blind and helpless I slid to the ground,
And lay with the night-dews on my hair,
Till the moon was down and the dawn was up,
And the fresh May morn rose clear and fair.

He was taken and I was left —
Left to wait and to watch and pray —
Till there came a message over the wires,
Chilling the air of the August day.

Killed in a skirmish eight or ten,
Wounded and helpless as many more;
All of them our Connecticut men,
From the little town of Danbury, four.

But I only saw a single name —
Of one who was all the world to me.
I promised to wait for him till I died:
O God! O Heaven! how long will it be?

KITTY.

ALAS! little Kitty — do give her your pity! —
Had lived seven years and was never called pretty!
Her hair was bright red and her eyes were dull blue,
And her cheeks were so freckled
They looked like the speckled
Wild-lilies, which down in the meadow-lands grew.
If her eyes had been black, if she'd only had curls,
She had been, so she thought, the most happy of girls.

Her cousins around her, they pouted and fretted,
But they were all pretty and they were all petted;
While poor little Kitty, though striving her best
To do her child's duty,
Not sharing their beauty,
Was always neglected and never caressed.
All in vain, so she thought, was she loving and true,
While her hair was bright red and her eyes were dull blue;

But one day, alone, 'mid the clover-blooms sitting,
She heard a strange sound as of wings round her flitting.
A light not of sunbeams, a fragrance more sweet
Than the wind's, blowing over
The red-blossomed clover,
Made her thrill with delight from her head to her feet;
And a voice, sweet and rare, whispered low in the air,
"See that beautiful, beautiful child sitting there!"



Thrice blessed little Kitty! she almost looked pretty.
Beloved by the angels, she needed no pity.
O juvenile charmers! with shoulders of snow,
Ruby lips, sunny tresses,
Forms made for caresses, —
There's one thing, my beauties, 't is well you should know:
Though the world is in love with bright eyes and soft hair,
It is only *good* children the angels call fair.

GRANDMOTHER'S CHAIR.

GRANDMOTHER sits in her easy chair,
Softly humming some old-time air;
And as she sings, her needles keep pace
With the smiles that flit o'er her wrinkled face;
While the firelight flickers and fades away,
And comes again like the breaking day.

From morning till evening she knits and sings,
While ever the pendulum tireless swings
The moments around, with its tick and stroke,
Nor hastes for the festal, nor lags for the yoke.
And grandmother never repines at her fate
Of being the last at the "Crystal Gate."

Husband and daughters and sons all there,
Wearing the "crown and the garments fair,"
Singing the songs that will never tire,
And swelling the chorus of heaven's choir;
But patiently, hopefully bides the time
That shall bring her at last to a fairer clime.



Grandmother's chair will be vacant soon,
For the rays of life slant far past noon;
But yonder in heaven she 'll sing again,
Joining the evermore glad refrain,
Wearing the "crown" and the "garments fair,"
While we mournfully stand by her vacant chair.

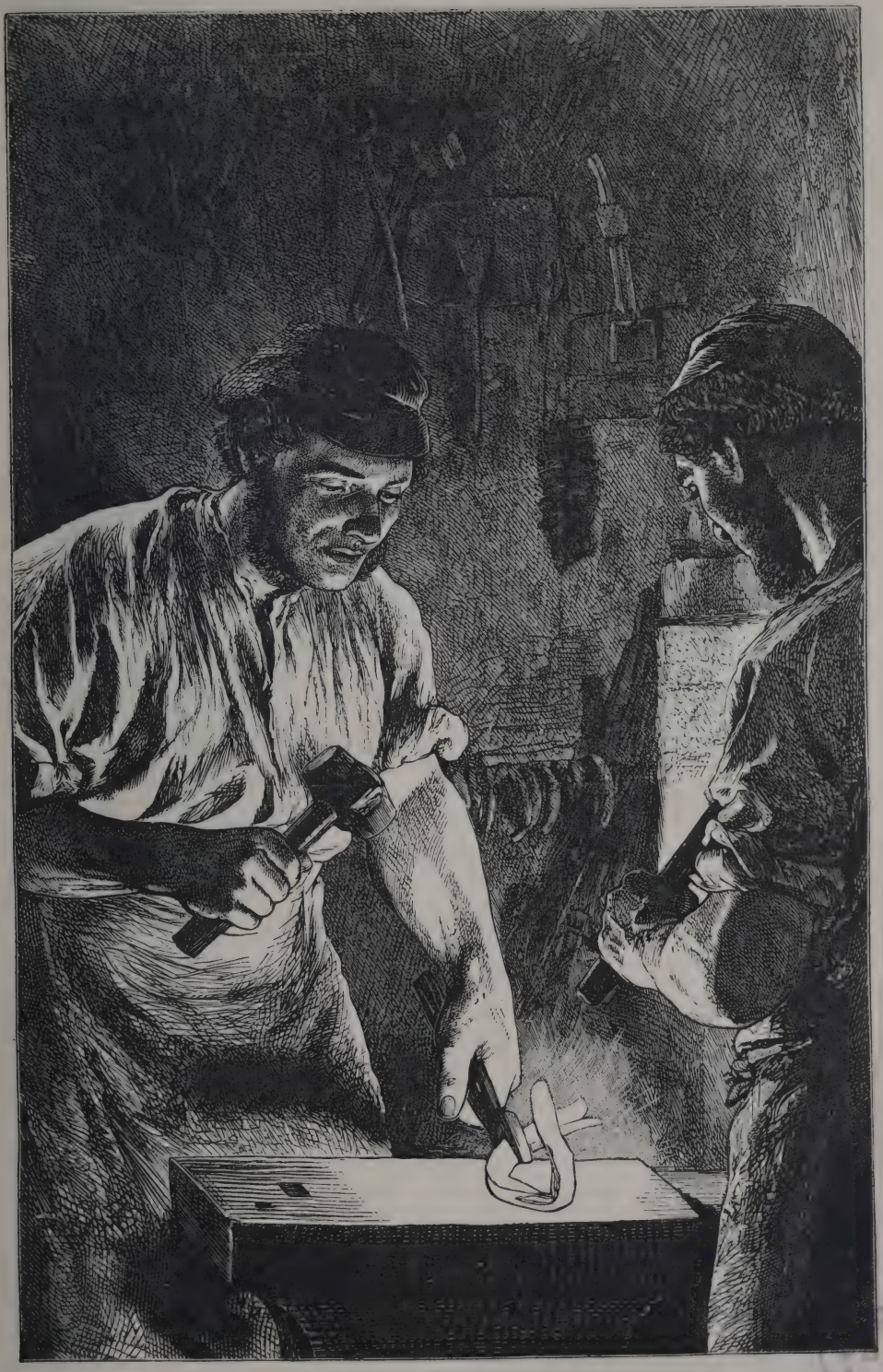
The Village Blacksmith.

UNDER a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands,
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp and black and long,
His face is like the tan,
His brow is wet with honest sweat;
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door:
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from the threshing floor.



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He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice
Singing in the village choir,
And makes his heart rejoice,

It sounds to him like her mother's voice
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more, —
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close:
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought:
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought!

Ring Out, Wild Bells!



ING out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light.
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,—
Ring, happy bells, across the snow.
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause
And ancient forms of paltry strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.



Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold,
Ring out the thousand wars of old;
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land;
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

JOE.

ALL day long, with a vacant stare,
Along in the chilling autumn air,
With naked feet he wanders slow
Over the city, — the idiot Joe!

I often marvel why he was born, —
A child of humanity thus forlorn,
Unloved, unnoticed by all below.
A cheerless thing is the life of Joe!

Beauty can throw no spell o'er him;
His inner vision is weak and dim,
And Nature in all her varied show
Weareth no charm for the eyes of Joe.

Earth may wake at the kiss of Spring,
Flowers may blossom and birds may sing;
With joy the crystal streams may flow:
They never make glad the heart of Joe.

His vague and wandering thoughts enfold
No dreams of glory, no schemes for gold;
He knows not the blight of hopes, yet, oh!
A blighted thing is the life of Joe.



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Who would not suffer the ills of life,
Its numberless wrongs, its sin and strife,
And willingly bear its weight of woe,
Rather than be the idiot Joe?

I think of him in the silent night,
When every star seems a beacon light
To guide us wanderers here below
To the better land, — the home of Joe.

For He who hears when the ravens call
And watches even the sparrow's fall, —
He, in his measureless love, I know,
Will kindly care for the soul of Joe.

COME IN, MY CHILD.

SHIVERING, sad,
Scantily clad,
And face so pale and so old;
With weary, worn feet,
Treading the street,
Windy and wintry and cold!
Something to wear!
Something to eat!
Poorest of fare
In hunger is sweet.

Blessed and holy the angelic strain
That sweetly descended on Bethlehem's plain.
O wonderful story!
To God be the glory,
And peace and good will unto men!
And down the long ages,
By bards and by sages,
By priest and by people,
By pulpit and steeple,
By bell and by voice,
The nations rejoice:
'T is peace and good will unto men!


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Shivering, sad,
Scantily clad,
She stands in the window's light;
She sees the joy of the merry throng,
She hears the music of Christmas song,
She sees the table all spread with food,
And then she wonders if God *is* good,
And weeps; for 't is Christmas night!
"Come in, my child," said a cheerful voice;
"Come in, and help us all rejoice.
Within there is warmth and food for you:
Come in, and find God's promise true."
And she stood within the cheerful hall,
She heard the welcome to one and all,
And the tears were dried from her gladdening eyes,
While the stars looked down from the Christmas skies.

And so for the weary and worn of earth
Do the blessings come from the heavenly birth;
And still sounds forth the blessed strain,
As sweet as of old on Bethlehem's plain,
The wonderful story,
"To God be the glory,
And peace and good will unto men!"
"Come unto me, ye weary and faint;
Come unto me with every complaint.
The door is wide open, — come, enter ye in;
Leave behind you all trouble, all care, and all sin;
Listen the Christmas song once and again, —
Peace on the earth and good will unto men!"

The Dream of Home.

HE sleeps! With watching weary, worn
With toil and terror, tempest-torn,
The sailor-boy sleeps and dreams.
The ship 's a wreck upon the shore,
Where angry waves two seamen bore,
In sunset's dying gleams.

Cold blew the ocean's savage blast,
And coldly o'er the rocks it cast
The freezing, drenching spray.
Yet still slept on the sailor-boy,
And dreamed of home's ecstatic joy—
Of home far, far away.

His mother folds him to her heart,
Her lips a mother's kiss impart,
Her arms entwine his form;
His brother shouts, his sister weeps,—
While on the rocks he shivering sleeps
In midnight's howling storm.

The morning comes, the blessed morn!
To sailors wrecked and tempest-torn
It brings the blessed light.


GAERTS. Ed. Sc.
V. De Donckr. Dr.

The tough old tar has watched the boy,
Dreaming of home's far distant joy,
Through all the gloomy night.

The storm has ceased, the waves subside,
The rough old salt looks far and wide,
As sunrise gilds the wave.
O blessed sight in morning light!
A stout ship comes, her canvas white
Like angel wings, to save!

The watcher wakes the sleeping youth:
His dream shall be the living truth;
No longer sigh and weep.
That mother's arms her sailor-boy
Shall fold erelong in rapturous joy,
As in his shivering sleep.

When I Mean to Marry.

WHEN do I mean to marry? Well,
'T is idle to dispute with fate;
But if you choose to hear me tell,
Pray listen while I fix the date.

When daughters haste, with eager feet,
A mother's daily toil to share;
Can make the puddings which they eat,
And mend the stockings which they wear;

When maidens look upon a man
As in himself what they would marry,
And not as army-soldiers scan
A sutler or a commissary;

When gentle ladies, who have got
The offer of a lover's hand,
Consent to share his earthly lot,
And do not mean his lot of land;

When young mechanics are allowed
To find and wed the farmers' girls
Who *don't* expect to be endowed
With rubies, diamonds, and pearls;



When wives, in short, shall freely give
 Their hearts and hands to aid their spouses,
And live as they were wont to live
 Within their sires' one-story houses;

Then, madam, if I'm not too old,
 Rejoiced to quit this lonely life,
I'll brush my beaver, cease to scold,
 And look about me for a wife!



CHRISTMAS BELLS.

THE bells, the bells, the Christmas bells,
How merrily they ring!
As if they felt the joy they tell
To every human thing.
The silvery tones, o'er vale and hill,
Are swelling soft and clear,
As, wave on wave, the tide of sound
Fills the bright atmosphere.

The bells, the merry Christmas bells,
They're ringing in the morn!
They ring when in the eastern sky
The golden light is born;
They ring as sunshine tips the hills
And gilds the village spire;
When, through the sky, the sovereign sun
Rolls his full orb of fire.

The Christmas bells, the Christmas bells,
How merrily they ring!
To weary hearts a pulse of joy,
A kindlier life they bring.
The poor man on his couch of straw,
The rich on downy bed,
Hail the glad sounds as voices sweet
Of angels overhead.



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The bells, the silvery Christmas bells,
O'er many a mile they sound!
And household tones are answering them
In thousand homes around.
Voices of childhood, blithe and shrill,
With youth's strong accents blend,
And manhood's deep and earnest tones
With woman's praise ascend.

The bells, the solemn Christmas bells,
They're calling us to prayer;
And hark! the voice of worshippers
Floats on the morning air.
Anthems of noblest praise there'll be,
And glorious hymns to-day,
Te Deums loud and Glorias:
Come, to the church, — away!

By the Alma River.

WILLIE, fold your little hands;
Let it drop, that "soldier" toy;
Look where father's picture stands,—
Father, who here kissed his boy
Not two months since,—father kind,
Who this night may— Never mind
Mother's sob, my Willie dear,
Call aloud that He may hear
Who is God of battles; say,
"Oh, keep father safe this day
By the Alma River!"

Ask no more, child. Never heed
Either Russ or Frank or Turk,
Right of nations or of creed,
Chance-poised victory's bloody work.
Any flag i' the wind may roll
On thy heights, Sebastopol!
Willie, all to you and me
Is that spot, where'er it be,
Where he stands — no other word!
Stands — God sure the child's prayer heard —
By the Alma River.

Willie, listen to the bells
Ringing through the town to-day:
That's for victory. Ah! no knells
For the many swept away,—



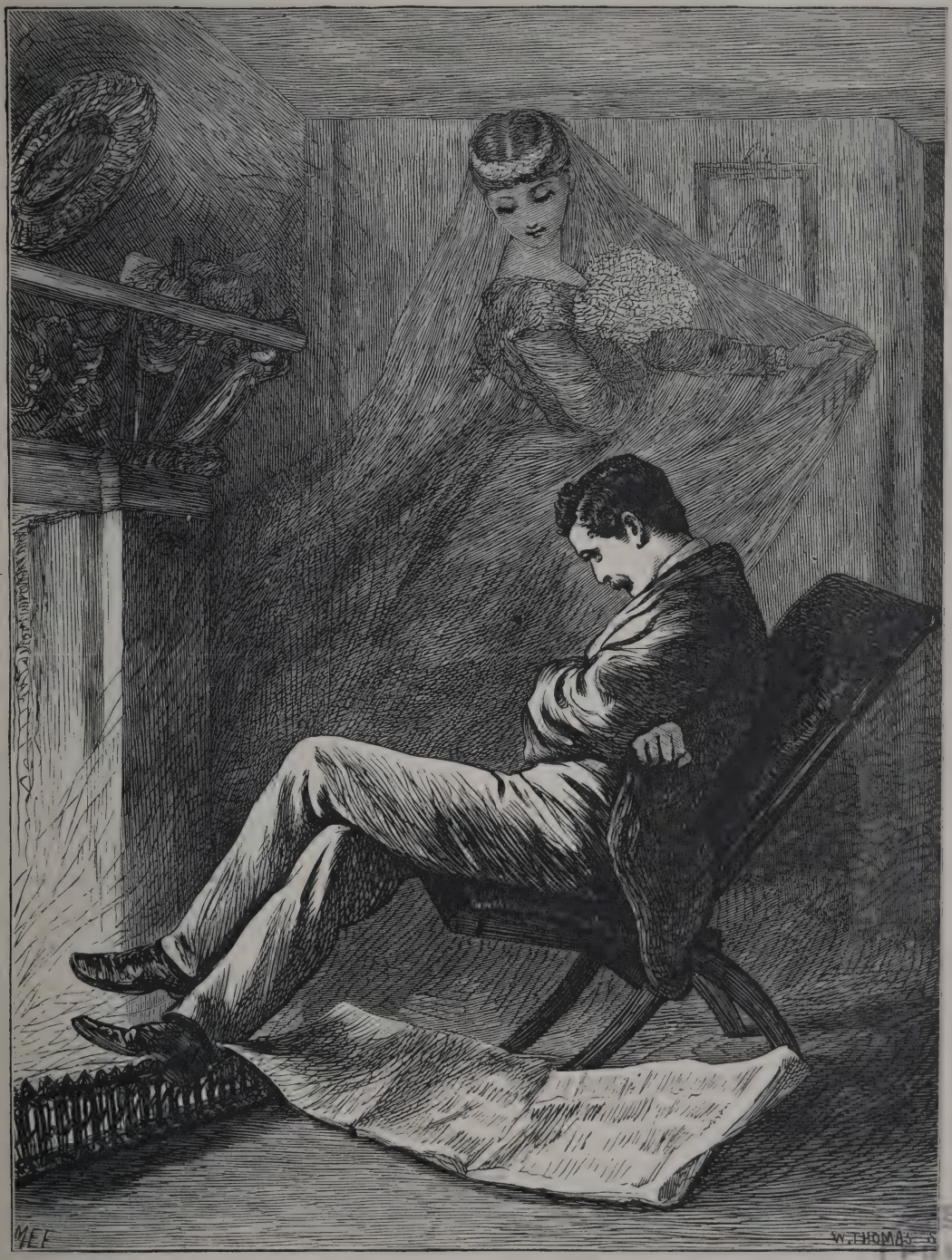
Hundreds, thousands! Let us weep,
We who need not, — just to keep
Reason steady in my brain
Till the morning comes again,
Till the third dread morning tell
Who they were that fought and *fell*
By the Alma River.

Come, we'll lay us down, my child.
Poor the bed is, poor and hard;
Yet thy father, far exiled,
Sleeps upon the open sward,
Dreaming of us two at home;
Or beneath the starry dome
Digs out trenches in the dark,
Where he buries — Willie, mark —
Where *he buries* those who died
Fighting bravely at his side
By the Alma River.

Willie, Willie, go to sleep,
God will keep us, O my boy!
He will make the dull hours creep
Faster, and send news of joy,
When I need not shrink to meet
Those dread placards in the street,
Which for weeks will ghastly stare
In some eyes — Child, say thy prayer
Once again, — a different one:
Say, "O God, thy will be done
By the Alma River!"

The Bachelor's Soliloquy.

TO wed, or not to wed: that is the question:—
Whether 't is nobler in a man to suffer
The slings and sorrows of that blind young archer,
Or fly to arms against a host of troubles,
And, at the altar, end them. To woo — to wed —
No more; and by this step to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand hopes and fears
The single suffer — 't is a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To woo — to wed —
To wed — perchance repent! Aye, there 's the rub;
For in that wedded state, what woes may come
When we have launched upon that untried sea
Must give us pause; there 's the respect
That makes celibacy of so long life;
For who would bear the quips and jeers of friends,
The husband's pity and the coquette's scorn,
The vacant hearth, the solitary cell,
The unshared sorrows and the void within,
When he himself might his redemption gain
With a fair damsel. Who would beauty shun
To toil and plod over a barren heath,
But that the dread of something yet beyond —
The undiscovered country, from whose bourne


MEF
W. THOMAS

No bachelor returns — puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others we know not of!
Thus forethought does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And numberless flirtations, long pursued,
With this regard, their currents turn awry
And lose the name of marriage.

Harvest Song.

I LOVE, I love to see
Bright steel gleam through the land;
'T is a goodly sight, but it must be
In the reaper's tawny hand.

The helmet and the spear
Are twined with the laurel wreath;
But the trophy is wet with the orphan's tear,
And blood-spots rust beneath.

I love to see the field
That is moist with purple stain;
But not where bullet, sword, and shield
Lie strewn with the gory slain.

No, no; 't is where the sun
Shoots down his cloudless beams,
Till rich and bursting juice-drops run
On the vineyard earth in streams.

My glowing heart beats high
At the sight of shining gold;
But it is not that which the miser's eye
Delighteth to behold.



A brighter wealth by far
 Than the deep mine's yellow vein
Is seen around in the fair hills crowned
 With sheaves of burnished grain.

Look forth, thou thoughtless one,
 Whose proud knee never bends!
Take thou the bread that's daily spread,
 But think on Him who sends.

Look forth, ye toiling men!
 Though little ye possess,
Be glad that dearth is not on earth
 To make that little less.

Let the song of praise be poured
 In gratitude and joy,
By the rich man with his garners stored
 And the ragged gleaner boy.

The feast that Nature gives
 Is not for one alone;
'T is shared by the meanest slave that lives
 And the tenant of a throne.

Then glory to the steel
 That shines in the reaper's hand,
And thanks to Him who has blest the seed,
 And crowned the harvest land.

WATER BEAUTIES.

HOW beautiful the rain as it twinkles to the plain,
Like a million little jewels of the sun!
How it sparkles in the cup that the lily holdeth up,
Till the fairy people laugh again to see it overrun!

What a diamond is the dew, as it catches every hue
Of the leaflet and the petal where it lies!
And the grasses of the field and the quickened mosses yield,
In an odor as of thankfulness, their morning sacrifice.

Where the subtle spider twines all his geometric lines
Into nettings to confront the coming breeze,
How the curdled vapor beads every thread with jewel-seeds,
Irisdescent in the sunlight, like Aladdin's magic trees!

How delightful is the rill, as it trickles from the hill,
With a glimmer through the nodding of the ferns,
Like the charity of men that, if hidden, shows again
In the fresher light that ever seems to hide it where it burns.

What a liquid twinkle drips from the mower's mossy lips,
And the lips below, as mossy, of the well,
Where the father and the child, and the maiden undefiled,
From the oaken bucket fill their cup of crystal hydromel!



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Oh! the water, everywhere, from the rock and from the air,
Is a beauty that is better than we know.
'T is the Angel of the Lord to the reaper and the sward,
And the halo on her forehead is his glory-tinted bow!

Rock Me to Sleep.

BACKWARD, turn backward, O Time! in your flight;
Make me a child again just for to-night!
Mother! come back from the echoless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore;
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair,
Over my slumbers thy loving watch keep,—
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep!

Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years!
I am so weary of toils and of tears,—
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain;
Take them, and give me my childhood again.
I have grown weary of dust and decay,
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away,
Weary of sowing for others to reap,—
Rock me to sleep again, rock me to sleep!

Over my heart, in the days that are flown,
No love like mother-love ever has shone;
No other worship abides and endures,—
Faithful, unselfish, and patient, like yours.
None like a mother can charm away pain
From the sick soul and the world-weary brain.
Slumber's soft calm o'er my heavy lids creep,—
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep!



Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,
Fall on your shoulders again as of old;
Let it fall over my forehead to-night,
Shading my faint eyes away from the light;
For, with its sunny-edged shadows, once more
Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore.
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep, —
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep.

Clasped to your arms in a loving embrace,
With your light lashes just sweeping my face,
Never hereafter to wake or to weep, —
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep!

Nearer Home.

ONE sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er;
I'm nearer my home to-day
Than I ever have been before;

Nearer my Father's house,
Where the many mansions be;
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the crystal sea;

Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down;
Nearer leaving the cross,
Nearer gaining the crown!

But lying darkly between,
Winding down through the night,
Is the silent, unknown stream
That leads at last to the light.

Closer and closer my steps
Come to the dread abysm:
Closer Death to my lips
Presses the awful chrism.

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Oh, if my mortal feet
 Have almost gained the brink,
If it be I am nearer home
 Even to-day than I think, —

Father, perfect my trust;
 Let my spirit feel in death,
That her feet are firmly set
 On the Rock of a living faith!

LIGHT OF HOME.

MY son, thou wilt dream the world is fair,
And thy spirit will sigh to roam,
And thou *must* go; but never, when there,
Forget the light of home!

Though pleasures may smile with a ray more bright,
It dazzles to lead astray;
Like the meteor's flash, 't will deepen the night
When treading thy lonely way.

But the hearth of home has a constant flame,
And pure as vestal fire,—
'T will burn, 't will burn forever the same,
For nature feeds the pyre.

The sea of ambition is tempest-tossed,
And thy hopes may vanish like foam:
When sails are shivered and compass lost,
Then look to the light of Home!

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